



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

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Memorandum

To: Solicitor
Chief of Staff
Inspector General
Assistant Secretaries
Bureau and Office Heads

From: John Berry
Assistant Secretary
Policy, Management and Budget

Subject: Labor-Management Partnerships

As you know, on October 1, 1993, President Clinton signed Executive Order 12871, Labor-Management Partnerships. The Order directs agencies to create labor-management partnerships by forming labor-management committees or councils at appropriate levels, or adapting existing councils or committees, to help reform government. If the spirit and intent of this concept is fully embraced and innovatively used throughout the Department, partnership can be a highly effective tool for creating positive change.

I am aware of a number of successful partnerships within the Department. One of the most successful of our partnership experiences has occurred in the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) where a fifteen-year history of very litigious labor relations has been transformed into solid and successful partnerships. The Bureau's Reclamation Partnership Council (RPC) brings together high level management officials with the five national level unions that hold exclusive recognition. The RPC is credited with being an important part of the Bureau's 1996 Ford Foundation Innovations in Government Award from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. I commend BOR, and all other Department union and management officials, for fulfilling the President's Order and taking affirmative steps to create more efficient Government.

I challenge you to consider forming partnerships at appropriate levels of recognition at those locations where partnerships do not currently exist. The level of exclusive recognition is the point at which both parties have equal rights and responsibilities; this level is always an appropriate level for partnership. In certain specified circumstances, other levels may also be appropriate. Further, at those levels of recognition where partnerships already exist, it is crucial that parties perform a self-evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the partnership, and to identify those areas which are working well and those which may still need improvement.

My staff is available to assist you with this process in any way we can. Should you wish to discuss this issue further, please feel free to contact me on (202) 208-4203. For assistance with the partnership process, please contact Mr. John G. Combs, Senior Labor Relations Advisor, on (202) 208-6754.